



1992
Executive Research Project
S58

Women in Combat Arms A Combat Multiplier?

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93-06292



Unclassified

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

1a. REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION Unclassified		1b. RESTRICTIVE MARKINGS	
2a. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION AUTHORITY N/A		3. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY OF REPORT Distribution Statement A: Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.	
2b. DECLASSIFICATION/DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE N/A		5. MONITORING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S) Same	
4. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S) NDU-ICAF-92-557		7a. NAME OF MONITORING ORGANIZATION National Defense University	
6a. NAME OF PERFORMING ORGANIZATION Industrial College of the Armed Forces		7b. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code) Fort Lesley J. McNair Washington, D.C. 20319-6000	
6b. OFFICE SYMBOL (if applicable) ICAF-FAP		9. PROCUREMENT INSTRUMENT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER	
8a. NAME OF FUNDING/SPONSORING ORGANIZATION		10. SOURCE OF FUNDING NUMBERS	
8b. OFFICE SYMBOL (if applicable)		PROGRAM ELEMENT NO.	PROJECT NO.
8c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)		TASK NO.	WORK UNIT ACCESSION NO.
11. TITLE (Include Security Classification) <i>Industrial College of the Armed Forces</i>			
12. PERSONAL AUTHOR(S) <i>J. J. Clark</i>			
13a. TYPE OF REPORT Research		13b. TIME COVERED FROM Aug 91 TO Apr 92	
14. DATE OF REPORT (Year, Month, Day) April 92		15. PAGE COUNT	
16. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTATION			
17. COSATI CODES		18. SUBJECT TERMS (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number)	
FIELD	GROUP	SUB-GROUP	
19. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number) SEE ATTACHED			
20. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY OF ABSTRACT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNCLASSIFIED/UNLIMITED <input type="checkbox"/> SAME AS RPT. <input type="checkbox"/> DTIC USERS		21. ABSTRACT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION Unclassified	
22a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUAL Judy Clark		22b. TELEPHONE (Include Area Code) (202) 475-1889	22c. OFFICE SYMBOL ICAF-FAP

ABSTRACT

WOMEN IN COMBAT ARMS

A COMBAT MULTIPLIER?

LTC ROBERT L.A. LOSSIUS

This paper addresses the controversial issue of whether women ought to be allowed to serve in the Combat Arms of the United States Army. It does not provide any new enlightening reasons why women should or should not serve in the combat arms; but addresses previously reviewed issues and how they would affect the combat readiness of a combat arms unit.

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Women in Combat Arms A Combat Multiplier?

When I chose, "Women in Combat Arms", as the topic for my research paper I must admit that I had a preconceived notion that there was no place for women in the combat arms. After several months of research, studying the pros and cons, I am still convinced there is no room for women in the combat arms. My intent with this paper is to discuss some of these pros and cons, my conclusion and finally my recommendation. But first I will provide a history of women in U.S. Armed Services and where we are today. We will look at whether or not other countries of the world are incorporating women into the combat arms of their Armed Services.

There can be no argument that the world order is rapidly changing; the breakup of the Soviet Union, the unification of Germany and the freedom given to the countries of Eastern Europe. All these changes are forcing many of the countries of this world to review their Armed Forces. We will most certainly reduce and restructure our Armed Forces and have actively begun both tasks with the closing of numerous bases and reductions in Navy ships, Army divisions and Air Force wings. As we review the size of this all volunteer force we can not escape societal changes. They have an impact on how and/or who we recruit. One of the most significant changes in the past two decades, has been the dramatic increase of women in the work force. The

military reflects this increase and specifically the Army has increased from about 2% in 1977 to roughly 11.2%¹. This increase has not always gone smoothly. There have been many debates over where in the Army (which jobs) these women would work.

Women have played a role in the defense of America since the Revolutionary War. Probably the most famous from the Revolutionary War is "Molly Pitcher". Several stories claim to factualize what occurred, none that can be absolutely confirmed. However, it is generally agreed that in a battle during the Revolutionary War, she assisted the wounded crew of an artillery piece so that it could continue to fire on the enemy. Numerous stories abound throughout our history of women acting in the capacity of nurses, spies and in some cases masquerading as men so they could join all male units. Women made their largest initial contributions in the field of nursing. First as volunteers during the Civil War and then under civilian contract for the Spanish - American War². The first Nurse Corps was established in WWI by the U.S. Congress as an auxiliary to the U.S. Army. The Navy followed suit in 1908. Neither Nurse Corps were given military rank or privileges associated with military service. As World War I approached, the system for a Nurses Corps was amply established³. In 1916 the Navy, seeing no law to the contrary, put women in their reserve to be used as clerks. The Navy saw this as a way to make up shortages

and also to free men up for ship duty. When WWI broke out the Navy was prepared to bring women into the Navy in other positions besides nurses. During the war, the Army never changed its policy from nurses only. A total of 34,000⁴ women saw duty in the Armed Services during WWI serving as clerks, telephone operators and nurses. When the war drew to a close in 1918, significant demobilization of women in the Armed Forces occurred with only the nurses surviving. The idea of women in the active duty military was basically shelved, although some groups continued to pursue and press Congress for incorporation of women in the military. Nothing was accomplished until WWII⁵. The threat of World War II and the required mobilization put an undue strain on the available manpower pool. All services saw women as the solution, some services sooner than others. The Army's Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) became effective in May 1942, and the Navy's Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service (WAVES) about two and a half months later. Under the WAAC, women still did not receive equal billing with their male counterparts. They did not receive the same pay and were under a separate set of regulations. This was having a negative effect on recruiting. In June of 1943, not without some arm twisting on the hill, a new bill was passed. This bill established the Women's Army Corps (WAC), which remained until October 1978. In WWII the total number of women never reached more than 2.3% of the Armed

Services⁶.

With the end of WWII the women members of the Armed Forces demobilized in large numbers. However, many in Congress and leaders in the Armed Forces saw a permanent need for women. In 1948, Congress passed the Women's Armed Services Act (P.L. 625) formally establishing a place for women in all the Armed Forces, active and reserve. Key elements included placing a 2% ceiling on the number of women authorized in the Armed Forces and authorizing the service Secretaries to determine where women would serve. Specifically, the law prohibited Air Force and Navy women from duty on aircraft that would engage in combat. Additionally, Navy women could serve only on hospital ships or naval transports.⁷

The Korean War saw another increase in the use of women, but only as nurses. In 1951, George Marshall, Secretary of Defense, under pressure to meet recruiting goals for women, formed a committee called the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS). "The nature and purpose of the Committee is to assist and advise the Secretary of Defense on policies and matters relating to women in the military services. In carrying out its purpose the Committee interprets to the public the need for and the role of women as an integral part of the Armed Forces: encourages public acceptance of military service as a citizenship responsibility and as a career field for

qualified women; and provides a vital link between the Armed Services and the civilian community."⁶ This committee comprised of prominent men and women from the civilian community continues to advise the Secretary of Defense.

With the end of the Korean War, once again we saw a reduction in the Armed Services. Women continued to occupy clerical, administrative and medical positions. The late sixties and early seventies brought the beginning of changes for the roles of women in the Armed Services. The Vietnam War once again saw an increased requirement for manpower. Coupled with changing roles of women in the civilian world and the push for the passage of an Equal Rights Amendment we saw significant changes in a reluctant military establishment.

The political and legal changes that began in the early sixties and seventies gave new momentum to efforts to increase the participation of women in the Armed Services. With the need for more frontline troops in Vietnam, legislation was passed in 1967 to repeal the 1948 2% cap on women in the Armed Forces. In 1969, Air Force ROTC was opened for women and the Army and Navy followed in 1972. Congress passed the Equal Rights Amendment in March 1972, and although it has never been ratified by the appropriate number of states, it did initiate momentum to open up equal opportunities for women. In 1975, legislation was passed that allowed women into the three major service academies.

In 1978, two major steps were taken: Congress abolished the Women Army Corps thus integrating women into all the Armed Services and modified Title 10 of the U.S. Code to allow women to serve on Naval vessels that were not expected to be assigned a combat mission. Three court cases assisted in the advancement of women equality in the military.

In *Frontiero vs Richardson*, the Supreme Court ruled that dependents of military women could receive the same entitlements as dependents of military men. This 1973 decision formed the basis for sex discrimination suits that resulted in the aforementioned Congressional action to allow women into military academies. A 1976 Supreme Court decision in *Crawford vs Cushman*, ruled that women could not be discharged from the service due to pregnancy. A 1978 decision in *Owens vs Brown* the court forced the Navy to allow women to serve on naval supply and repair ships.⁹

With the increase in the number of women in the Armed Services, there has been a gradual reduction in the restrictions on what jobs women may occupy. The major issue for the past several years has been the ban against women in combat. "The original "combat exclusion" laws were part of the Womens Armed Services Act of 1948 (P.L. 80-625), which was passed to provide a means of mobilizing women in the event of general war."¹⁰ None of the statutes prevent women in the Army from serving in combat, but until December of 1991, the Navy and Air Force prohibited women from

serving "on ships and aircraft engaged in combat missions."¹¹ On 6 December 1991, the President signed into law an amendment that repealed the restriction of women flying aircraft into combat, but the law did not change the restriction on Navy women serving on combat vessels. The passing of this law does not automatically place women into the cockpit of fighter aircraft, but allows the Department of Defense to determine the policy. In other words taking the decision off the politically minded Congress and placing the decision on the shoulders of DOD. This may not be all bad. It gives DOD the flexibility to make the policy that best serves the readiness of our nations military.

The statute that applies to the Army is "Title 10, U.S.C. 3012, [that] gives the Secretary of the Army authority to determine personnel policy for the Army"¹². The Secretary of the Army has developed policies that exclude women from "routine" engagement in direct combat. "'Direct combat', a term used only by the Army is defined as engaging an enemy with individual or crew-served weapons while being exposed to direct enemy fire, a high probability of direct physical contact with the enemy's personnel, and a substantial risk of capture. Direct combat takes place while closing with the enemy by fire, maneuver, or shock effect in order to destroy or capture, or while repelling assault by fire, close combat or counterattack."¹³ In 1983, the U.S. Army initiated a code "system that evaluates

every position in the Army based on the duties of the Military Occupation Specialty (MOS) or Area of Concentration (AOC), and the units missions, tactical doctrine, and location on the battlefield. Each position is then coded based upon the probability of engaging in direct combat, with P1 representing the highest probability and P7 representing the lowest. Women are prohibited from occupying positions that are coded P1."¹⁶ That results in about 52% of the Army's job positions being open to women. This compares to 59% in the Navy, 20% in the Marines and 97% in the Air Force. These figures reflect the percentages prior to the change in legislation in 1991. Figures for the Navy and Air Force will probably rise.

Those who believe women should be allowed in all positions of the military argue that the above percentages should all be 100%. The original point of contention was whether women ought to be allowed in the Armed Services, but with numerous changes to statutes this has evolved into whether women ought to be allowed in the combat arms. This is just one of many topics facing women in the military but an extremely important one, especially for officers. In order to be promoted to the highest ranks within the Army it is virtually imperative that an officer be in the combat arms. Almost all officers promoted to the grade of General or Lieutenant General have commanded Army Divisions. No female officer has ever attained the rank of Lieutenant

General.

DACOWITS has been DODs advisor on these issues for over 40 years. DACOWITS' members are "civilian men and women appointed based on their outstanding reputations in business and the professions, public service, and record of civic leadership."¹⁵ As of May 1991 there were 37 members, 34 females and 3 males, appointed to 3 year terms. The committee meets twice a year, but between meetings committee members visit military installations, sit on one of 3 subcommittees (Force Utilization, Career Development, and Quality of Life), and make public appearances in support of military women. Without a doubt, DACOWITS has been instrumental in advancing the equal treatment of women in the military. DACOWITS has been vocal in their belief that the combat exclusion laws should be revoked. They believe that with the repeal of the combat exclusion statutes:

- ability rather than gender becomes the basis for assignment.
- flexibility is given to the Services to fully utilize all qualified personnel.
- opportunities are expanded for Service women to compete fairly for assignments and promotions.
- acceptance of Service women as full partners is enhanced. Further the events in the Persian Gulf demonstrated that the entire Theater of Operation is part of the modern battlefield where exposure to the risks of combat extended to all members of the Armed Forces."¹⁶

DACOWITS and proponents like Rep. Patricia Schroeder (D.- Colo.) and feminist Molly Yard (former president of NOW),

have been successful in revoking these statutes with the exception of Navy combat vessels. DACOWITS' fourth reason for the appeal of the statute deserves some further discussion because it shows up in many recent articles that argue women should be in the combat arms.

The fourth point disregards the risks associated with being in the combat arms and closing with the enemy versus someone in the rear area that may or may not have to worry about a "SCUD" landing on them. To even think the risks are the same is absurd. The entire Theater of Operations (TOA) were not under the same risks. For example, I was in Dahran at a corps headquarters and then in Rafha. Once the air war started and even during the ground campaign we lived extremely well. Most people slept in tents or buildings with electricity. While in Dahran we ate in a dining facility just as good as many facilities at U.S. Army posts in the U.S.. To say we were exposed to the same risks as those infantry, tank and artillery units that drove to the Euphrates River is totally incorrect. Were some soldiers killed in the rear area? You only have to follow the news to know about the terrible tragedy that occurred in Dahran when the SCUD landed on the Reserve units barracks. Because the deaths occurred in an area that one has not previously associated with combat, some would want to say the nature of combat has changed; that everywhere in the Theater of Operations everyone is at equal risk. It is not unusual for

deaths to occur in rear areas. In World War II, the Korean War, and Vietnam, personnel in the rear area, civilian and military, were vulnerable to bombings and attacks. This does not mean they were under the same risks as the men in direct combat.

Those that want women to be allowed to serve in combat units may be stretching and misinterpreting the facts from the Persian Gulf to reach an inappropriate conclusion. Carolyn Becraft, a well-known proponent of women in the military, made a statement in an article in 1991 that is an example of those using the facts inaccurately. She stated "the Persian Gulf War demonstrated to the American public, military officials, and politicians that women can serve in combat."¹⁷ No where in that war did we demonstrate that women can serve in the combat arms. Not one country that provided ground combat soldiers allows women in their combat arms. So how did we really demonstrate that women can serve in "combat"? As retired Marine General Robert Barrow said in a recent Senate testimony, "Exposure to danger is not combat. Combat is a lot more than that.... It's a lot more than getting shot at or getting killed by being shot at. Combat is finding, and closing with, and killing or capturing the enemy... it's killing, that's what it is."¹⁸ My point is not that women may not be able to kill but the Persian Gulf did not demonstrate that women can perform in combat units. In the Persian Gulf women were not in combat

units and didn't engage in combat. What we did demonstrate is that women contributed to the success of the war just as they have during the 200 year history of our country.

What about women who serve in the Armies of other countries of the world? This is important because these countries have valid experience attempting to incorporate women into their Army. I will primarily address those countries that have allowed women into their combat arms. One of the more written about uses of women in combat units has been about the Israelis. It is usually the country that is used as an example of a successful Army that allows women in combat arms. This is a myth. Israeli women fought for several months in the early period of their war for Independence (1947-1949). This was a desperate period for the Israelis when the very existence of their country was in doubt. For this end, but against Orthodox Judaism, women were brought into combat, This did not last long for several reasons. It was discovered that the enemy (ARABS) fought fiercely against those units with women in them, ether destroying the unit or fighting to the death rather than being shamed by those Israeli units with women.¹⁹ A number of captured women were raped and beaten to death. "Women became a liability in combat units because men were too anxious to avoid situations where women could be captured."²⁰ When I asked a visiting Israeli general, why women were no longer in combat units, he said some of the

returned bodies were unrecognizable. Although the same has happened to men, the Israeli people were not prepared to put their women in units where this could happen again. He said the other concern was surviving as a nation. A country can not survive if their child bearing women are in combat units being killed or maimed. Even though it takes a man and a woman to conceive a child, the woman is the key link. The child develops in her and she is the one who bears the child. Israeli women continue to be drafted into the Israeli defense force. They are administratively controlled by CHEN (Cheil Nashim, Women's Army), something similar to our old Womens Army Corps (WAC). Most serve in administrative functions while some serve as instructors in schools to free more men for combat duty.

Another country that was forced to use women in combat units was the former Soviet Union. During World War II, when the Germans invaded, men and women of all ages were required to defend the existence of their country. The women fought purely out of dire necessity and generally in all female units. Since World War II they have been trained to only serve in noncombatant roles. These two countries are the most widely used examples of women serving in combat units. In both countries women were used as a last resort where the existence of their nation was in doubt. As soon as that danger subsided women were placed back in their more traditional roles. The Israeli experience showed that units

were less "combat ready" and the enemy was much more inclined to fight to the death. Israel and Russia's experience with women in combat has not discouraged other countries from experimenting with women in combat units.

Of the NATO countries I could find only three that allow women into combat units: Netherlands, Norway, and Canada. Each has its restrictions. In the Netherlands where only 1.5% of Armed Forces are women, they cannot serve on submarines or in the Marines. Norway, where there are no restrictions, only about 1.4% of the Armed Services are women. None of these countries have ever experienced war with women in their combat units. The two countries that have, Israel and Russia were quick to move these women out of combat arms, especially Israel.

Proponents of women in the combat arms should review Canada's experience with women in the combat arms. Some would argue their efforts so far have been a failure. Only one female recruit has made it into the infantry. Why are women in the Canadian Combat Arms? The reason is from social changes that have been occurring not only in Canada and the U.S., but all over the world and that is the prevention of discrimination.

In Canada, two acts of legislation were passed. "The Canadian Human Rights Acts (CARA) and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms (CRF), which came into effect in 1982 and 1985, respectively, have prohibited discrimination on the grounds

of race, national/ethnic origin, color, religion, age, sex (including pregnancy and childbirth), marital status, pardoned conviction, and physical or mental disability (including disfigurement and drug dependency).²¹ Based on these acts, in February 1989, the Canadian human rights tribunal ordered the Canadian Defense Forces to remove all barriers to women's entry into all military occupations and units (with the exception of submarines). Since 1989 about 100 women tried to complete infantry training with only one being successful and, although unconfirmed, several newspapers reported that she is requesting a transfer out of the infantry. Fifteen women have passed training in the Artillery and three in armor. The failure of women in the Canadian infantry training has been primarily due to stamina and endurance. Just from the numbers it is my opinion that Canada's attempt to incorporate women into the combat arms has been relatively unsuccessful. During testimony before Congressional Committees many enlisted women indicate that they do not want to be in the combat arms and those that do have trouble meeting the physical standards. In summation, Israel and Russia who have used women in combat units, with negative results. Now we have Canada's experience in a peacetime army and it is not very favorable yet there are those in Congress and many outspoken civilians who believe we ought to put women in the combat arms.

As General Ono (then Deputy Chief of Staff for

Personnel) said in testimony before Military Personnel and Compensation subcommittee on women in Canada's combat arms, "So we are talking about the fact that a nation [Canada], a different Army went through experiences along these lines, and I think we can learn just as well from those sorts of experiences without going through a test of our own." We should not make the same mistakes because it is the "politically correct" thing to do. Rep. Patricia Schroeder (D. Col.) stated, "I'm ensuring her equality and removing barriers to her opportunity;"²² but Rep. Schroeder should be most concerned with combat readiness of our Armed Forces. The Army is not democratic, it is a non-democratic organization within a democratic society. We must not allow a social experiment to erode our combat effectiveness! As retired Colonel David Hackworth stated, "Equality and opportunity are noble ideas, but they have little to do with the battlefield, where the issues are living and dying."²³ Women in the combat arms will hurt combat readiness and downgrade our ability to successfully protect this country in time of war for several reasons to be discussed in the following paragraphs.

The first is physical strength and stamina. That was the number one reason why Canadian women could not meet the standards for infantry. Studies have shown that most females do not have the upper body strength nor stamina that most men do. Comparisons of the United States Military

Academy (USMA) Classes of 1981 and 1989 men and women cadets on the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT), USMA indoor obstacle course and the USMA Physical Ability Test show substantial performance differences between the men and women. On seven of the eight items tested, 50% of the women perform below the bottom 5% of the men. The single exception is the situp test on the APFT. According to APFT scores collected by the U.S. Army Physical Fitness School in 1984 and 1985, male soldiers performed an average of twenty more push-ups than female soldiers. The proponents of women in the combat arms would argue that we should make one standard for all in the combat arms and whoever makes it should go in the combat arms. Canada has tried that and produced only a single qualified woman. The "norming" of physical training test has been the technique used by most services to balance the scores between men and women, but there is no "norming" in combat, women must be able to accomplish the mission just as well as men. According to Charles Moskos, a noted sociologist, "... average female upper-body strength is 42 percent less than average male upper-body strength. Looked at another way, on the average the top fifth of women in lifting capacity are the equal of the bottom fifth of men on the same measure."²⁴ That means that work requiring heavy lifting or carrying of weight puts women at a severe disadvantage. These are some of the exact needs of a combat soldier. Many of the proponents of women

in combat argue that modern war is technological and push-button affairs, thus not requiring the strength needed by soldiers in previous wars. There is some truth to that if you are in the Air Force, Navy or some rocket firing air defense unit. But there is little difference to the close combat of today and previous wars. If anything, the ground soldier of today carries heavier loads than in previous wars. Some radio telephone operators carry rucksacks weighing 100 pounds and it was not uncommon to carry loads in the 50-70 pound range. With the demise of the Soviet Union, the decrease in the size of the American Army (mostly mechanized and armored divisions) and the greater use of light infantry in rapid - deployment forces, more soldiers will be carrying their equipment on their back. "Brawn will count for more than computer smarts for a while yet. A 110 pound woman with the heart of a lion can't pack out a wounded 200 pound comrade."²⁵

Is pregnancy a combat readiness problem? Anything that takes soldiers away from their assigned duties is a readiness problem. Proponents of women in combat would argue that it is not. Their logic is faulty. Somewhere between 10 and 15 percent of the Army women are pregnant during a normal year. A pregnant soldier is nondeployable overseas. This can cause significant problems in a unit where the pregnant woman may occupy a small density MOS or as in the case of some battalions deploying to the Persian

Gulf, the women occupied key leadership positions. A team that may have worked together for an extended period finds itself leaderless or minus a key member of a team. The pregnant women problem continued while the units were in Saudi Arabia. Some newspaper reports indicate as many as 1200 women were evacuated from the Gulf. Department of the Army can confirm that 60 women were returned through medical channels but they have no idea how many were sent back via other channels. I know that a friend of mine commanding a hospital in Saudi Arabia, used 500 pregnancy tests in the first three weeks in-country. It was a widely held perception, based on the personal knowledge of leaders, that women became pregnant so they would not have to deploy or once in country, redeploy. Everyone of those soldiers had to be replaced at a crucial time in the mission, when people's lives depended on them. Another reason why women should not be in the combat arms. Once women are diagnosed as pregnant and for six weeks after the birth (a temporary profile can extend this another 90 days), their duties are limited. That may be acceptable for an office job in the states, but unacceptable for a combat arms unit that may have to go into combat. A 9 man infantry squad minus 1 or 2 because of pregnancies is significantly less combat effective. While we loose men now to sports injuries, sickness and in combat to wounded and killed, pregnancy adds an additional detractor to combat readiness that only occurs

because women would be in the unit. While pregnancy is an obvious problem so is fraternization between men and women.

Fraternization is defined in AR 600-20, para 5-7f as "Relationships between servicemembers of different ranks which involve (or give the appearance of) partiality, preferential treatment, or the improper use of rank or position for personal gain, are prejudicial to good order, discipline, and high unit morale". Per HQDA Ltr 600-84-2, dated 23 November 1984, subject: "Fraternization and Regulatory Policy Regarding Relationships Between Members of Different Ranks"; "The present policy was promulgated because changing relationships--especially dating--between members of different rank or grade was a predictable and reasonable consequence of more women entering the service. We could reasonably predict that young women would date and marry senior soldiers because women date on an average men 2-4 years older than they are themselves; and more dating would take place in the same unit because people tend to date people from their work place." You would think this is a new concept by the way some proponents of women in combat would discuss the topic. They believe that leadership and proper training will prevent fraternization. Good try, but that just doesn't fly in the face of reality. If our troops were robots then we might be able to prevent fraternization. In March of 1990 the Military Personnel and Compensation subcommittee of the committee on Armed Services House of

Representatives met to discuss numerous topics on women in the military -- one of which covered fraternization. One of the witness's was the Hon. Patricia Schroeder, representative from Colorado, and a strong proponent of lifting all exclusions to women in combat units. I quote and, where necessary summarize, her discussion with one of the committee members Rep. H. Martin Lancaster (N.C.). Mr. Lancaster was discussing the committee's recent visit to Fort Bragg, North Carolina and the committee's discussions with men and women at that post. Mr. Lancaster directed the following comments to Mrs. Schroeder, asking her if she accepted this as a problem; "... one of the problems raised with regard to women in combat situations ... is an attitudeness of protectiveness in a brother or sister kind of, or for that matter, girlfriend kind of relationship. Second, is the romance angle that may develop in a unit. The argument has been made that in a combat situation the effectiveness of the unit might be reduced by male combatants hanging back to help a female combatant who may have been wounded and thus might endanger the entire unit."²⁶ The Hon. Pat Schroeder, who has never served in the armed forces, answers his comment in this manner; "... I think you are dealing with the generation that grew up thinking of themselves as team members more than the protective thing that maybe you and I grew up with when we were younger. Those are the people who are now in the

military. I mean, they grew up playing on soccer teams together and so forth and so on."²⁷ Soccer is an inapt analogy and indicates that Schroeder has a lack of understanding of combat, and the relationships that develop when men and women are in the same units. Fraternization in units can lead to indiscipline that is disruptive to non-combat units but can be deadly in combat units. The complicating factor in units with men and women, is that sexual attraction may also lead to fraternization. The cohesion and bonding that is so important to the success of a combat unit can be severely disrupted by male-female relationships. Yet, with this lack of understanding she is still calling for the lifting of all combat-exclusion rules. The best training and leadership won't solve the problem of fraternization. BGeneral L.W. Mackenzie, Canadian Armed Forces; expressed Canada's concern this way:

The combat arms are seen to be particularly vulnerable to the threat posed by fraternization for a number of reasons.

Young men and women serving in the combat arms, particularly during training exercises and perhaps more so during war time, will have much greater opportunity to fraternize than in other situations such as an eight to five office environment. Soldiers in the combat arms must live, fight and hopefully survive together, day and night, in a highly unstructured environment called the battlefield. In infantry companies, armour squadrons, and gun batteries, it is impractical if not impossible, to segregate on the basis of rank, much less by sex, for even the most basic activities such as quartering and ablutions.

Although actual fighting is an intense, all consuming activity, for individual units it is

normally of short duration and invariably there are long periods of relative inactivity. During these lulls in combat, soldiers of both sexes will undoubtedly pursue the satisfaction of needs other than those of mere survival. Whether it occurs in a trench, a snow cave, or a tank is irrelevant, the fact remains that the creation of mixed gender units presents unprecedented opportunities for fraternization.²⁸

The problem of fraternization is real, not one that can be lightly kicked under the table. It is a problem that can't be tolerated in the combat arms. Fraternization causes too much disruption and distracts leaders from their primary focus of preparing for successful accomplishment of combat missions.

The Army must be strong in its conviction to keep women out of the combat arms. Their performance in combat support and combat service support arms has been relatively good, but hopefully we will never arrive at the point where women should serve in the combat arms. The proponents for women in the combat arms seem seldom concerned with the operational readiness of the Army, they appear more concerned with equality of opportunity. We only have to review the results of women in the combat arms of other countries to know that women can not adequately serve in the combat arms. We must learn from their mistakes. One would think I hate women; far from it. What I am afraid of, is the unnecessary loss of life because we did not adequately review the facts that lay before us. The problems associated with women in the combat arms; stamina and upper

body strength, pregnancy and fraternization are all
detriments to operational readiness. With the downsizing
of American forces and the requirement for a rapid
deployment force we can not afford not to be at our very
best. We may never again have the luxury of a 6 month
preparation phase as we did in the Persian Gulf. We must be
prepared to fight and win on arrival. To this end keep
women out of the combat arms.

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